



**chryssa:**  
selected  
prints and  
drawings,  
1959-1962

Long 3-11-1962  
10-10-1962

Between 1959 and 1962 Chryssa was engaged in making a series of lithographs and drawings involving the newspaper. These works precede the neon sculptures, for which she is best known, and reflect certain aspects of the transition which was taking place in American painting during these years. At this time the emphasis on process which characterized the art of the Abstract Expressionists was being modified by a concern for concept and formality. Chryssa's prints and drawings of this period combine elements of both styles in an exploration of various ideas which are both expressive and conceptual.

Working with discarded metal newspaper plates, Chryssa has produced works which range from rigid grid drawings to a kind of printed collage. She applied different solutions to the arrangement of random words, plates of type and blank spaces, based on the structure of the newspaper page. The drawings, some in white oil on grey paper, are the most tightly composed and represent her most highly organized handling of design. The single plate of type has been repeated over and over, organized into a rigid grid system whose size is determined by the plate. The plate has been re-inked, re-wiped, and printed and/or stamped several times in the same spot, making the actual letters illegible. The reversal of the colors (white type instead of black) serves to further separate the finished drawing from its familiar origins, forcing the viewer to confront it as an object in itself. Though for the most part more rigid in organization, her drawings bear a strong resemblance to the work of Jasper Johns. At the same time Chryssa was making these drawings and prints, as well as her metal bas reliefs and plaster letter analyses, Johns was also working with words and letters; manipulating legi-

bility and meaning with purely formal and aesthetic concerns.

Chryssa has been involved with an endless analysis of numerals and letters by means of abstraction, repetition and isolation. This analysis ultimately changes their function and quality. Her approach to the analysis of letters is not scientific. She tries to exhaust all possibilities, not to find a universal solution or description as the scientist, but rather an artistic goal. We see many interpretations of the weathermap; in each drawing or print the aesthetic end is different. Chryssa is interested in the quality of the object as art rather than as language or symbol.

In the prints the grid is often less arbitrary, emerging as the structure of the composition rather than functioning only as an organizational device, as in the drawings. In *Newspaper Book. Pages 12 and 13, 1962*, for instance, the grid is only implied, but with the rectangles of type printed in both black and white, a three dimensionality is created which dominates the entire print. It is also interesting to note that here the blocks of "type" are filled in with Chryssa's own abstract daubs and swirls, some on top of printed type, others in blank squares. She weighs a unit of gestural expression against the formality of the block of type. The juxtaposition of headlines, hand-outlined, with blocks of type and painted areas in *Newspaper Book. Page 18, October 8, 1962* form a kind of printed collage which plays the recognizable against the illegible and results in a solution quite opposite to that of the drawings. She is always in control of her technique, and her images, in all their variations, combine a discreet elegance with imaginative solutions.

1. (Chryssa Study). 1959-1962. Oil on paper. 25¼ x 40¼ .  
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. James Miho.
2. *Newspaper Advertisement, Car Tires*. 1959-1962. Oil and pencil on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
3. *Newspaper Book*. 1962. Lithographs. Edition of 7, New York. Lent by Mr. Leo Steinberg.
  - 3a. No page number. March 26, 1962.
  - 3b. No page number. March 26, 1962.
  - 3c. No page number. March 26, 1962.
  - 3d. No page number. October 5, 1962.
  - 3e. No page number. 1962.
  - 3f. No page number. 1962.
  - 3g. No page number. 1962.
  - 3h. Page 5. May 8, 1962.
  - 3i. Page 6. April 7, 1962.
  - 3j. Page 7. April 17, 1962.
  - 3k. Page 8. 1962.
  - 3l. Page 9. May 26, 1962.
  - 3m. Page 10. 1962.
  - 3n. Page 11. June 1962.
  - 3o. Page 12. 1962.
  - 3p. Page 13. 1962.
  - 3q. Page 14. October 7, 1962.
  - 3r. Page 15. March 26, 1962.
  - 3s. Page 16. May 19, 1962.
  - 3t. Page 17. 1962.
  - 3u. Page 18. October 8, 1962.
  - 3v. Page 21. July 15, 1962.
4. *Newspaper Page, Advertisement*. 1959-1962. Oil and pencil on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
5. *Newspaper Page, Classified Ads*. 1959-1962. Oil and pencil on paper. 25 x 30. Lent by the artist.
6. *Newspaper Page, Preferred Stocks*. 1959-1962. Oil with pencil and chalk on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
7. *Newspaper Page, Preferred Stocks, Green*. 1961. Oil, ink and pencil on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
8. *Newspaper Page, Sock Advertisement*. 1959-1962. Oil and pencil on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
9. *Newspaper Page, Stocks*. 1959-1962. Oil with pencil and chalk on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
10. *Newspaper Page, Stocks*. 1960. Oil with pencil and chalk on paper. 25 x 40. Lent by the artist.
11. Untitled. 1962. Wash. 23¾ x 35½ (sight).  
Lent by Mrs. Robert M. Benjamin.
12. *View from Above, Study for Plaster Sculpture*. 1959-1962. Pencil, graphite and charcoal on paper. 30 x 45. Lent by the artist.
13. *Weathermaps*. 1962. Oil on paper. 48 x 39.  
Lent by Mr. Vittorio de Nora.

## Chryssa

Born in Athens, Greece in 1933.

Studied at Académie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris, in 1953-1954, and at the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, in 1954-1955. Lives in New York City.

### Solo Exhibitions

- 1961. Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
- 1962. Cordier and Ekstrom, New York.
- 1963. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 1965. Institute of Contemporary Arts, Philadelphia.
- 1966. Pace Gallery, New York.
- 1968. Pace Gallery, New York. Harvard University, Carpenter Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Galerie Rive Droite, Paris.
- 1969. Galerie der Spiegel, Cologne.
- 1970. 32 Carlo Alberto, "Arte Contemporanea," Turin.

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1960. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture."
- 1961. Carnegie Institute, "42nd Pittsburgh International Exhibition."
- 1962. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture."
- 1963. Ten American Sculptors, organized by Walker Art Center for VII Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil (1964—Walker Art Center; San Francisco Museum of Art; City

- Art Museum of St. Louis; The Dayton Art Institute).
- 1964. Carnegie International, Pittsburgh. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture."
- 1966. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Art of the United States." Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture."
- 1968. Kassel, Germany, "Documenta."
- 1969. X Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil.
- 1972. XXXVI Biennale, Venice.

### Selected Public Collections

- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.
- Ateneumin Taidemuseo, Helsinki, Finland.
- Boise Art Association, Boise Gallery of Art, Boise, Idaho.
- The Chase Manhattan Bank Art Program, New York.
- The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Holland.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany.
- The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
- Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland.
- Tate Gallery, London, England.
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Photo: Henry Groskinsky

**Whitney Museum of American Art**  
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